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Learned Comment

U P O N

Dr. HARE's Excellent Sermon

(F)
Preach'd before the

D. of Marlborough,

On the Surrender of

BOUCHAIN.

By an Enemy to P E A C E.

Et multis utile Bellum.

L O N D O N,

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Learned Comment
UPON
Dr. Harris's Excellent Sermon
Preached before the



of Mr. Milbourn
BOLTON
By the Rev. Wm. D. O.
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I HAVE been so well Entertain'd by reading Dr. *Hare's* Sermon, Preach'd before the Duke of *Marlborough* and the Army, in way of Thanksgiving for passing the Lines and taking *Bouchain*, that I can't forbear giving part of my Thoughts thereupon to the Publick. If a Colonel had been to preach at the Head of his Regiment, I believe he would have made just such a Sermon; which, before I begin with, I must beg leave to consider the Preface, and that stale Topick in the Publisher, of Printing a *Discourse without the Author's leave, by a Copy got from a Friend; being himself so modest, that he would by no means bear of Printing what was drawn up in so much haste.* If the thing be not worth Publishing, either the Author is a Fool, or his Friend a Knave. Besides, the Apology seems very needless for one that has so often been complimented upon his Productions; of which we have seen several without either *Art or Care*, tho' Publish'd with this famous Doctor's Consent. A good Argument, indeed, is not the worse for being *without Art or Care*, but an ill one is nothing without both. If Plainness and Honesty made amends for every hasty foolish Composition, we should never have an end, and every Dunce that blotted Paper would have the same Plea. But the good Doctor's Zeal for the continuation of the War, must atone for the rest of his Defects: His Politicks and his Divinity seem to be much of a size; there is no

more of the last in his Sermon, than what is to be found in the Text; he is so great an Enemy to a *Partition*, that he scorns to divide even *That*.

He begins, *Pag. 5. I can't but think, that one of the properest Acknowledgments to God for the manifest Tokens we receive of his good Providence, is to consider their natural Tendency, and what is the true use which he has put into our Power to make of them.* May we not very well Query whether this be Sense or Truth? The properest Acknowledgments to God for the manifest Tokens, &c. is to offer him Thanks and Praise, and obey his Laws. *Pag. 6. Persevere bravely in the just and necessary War we are engag'd, till we can obtain such a Peace, as the many Successes he has given us naturally lead to, and by the continuance of the Divine Favour must end in, if we be content to wait his leisure, and are not by our Impatience and misgiving Fears, wanting to our selves.* At this rate when must we expect a Peace? May we not justly enquire, Whether it be God's, or the D. of M—'s Leisure, he would have us wait? He is there in an Army well paid, sees nothing but Plenty, nay Profuseness in the Great Officers, and Riches in the General. Profuseness, when they every day in their Turns receive the Honour of his G's Company to Dinner with them: At that sumptuous Table which his G. once a Week provides for himself and them, the good Doctor never considers what we suffer at Home, or how long we shall be able to find them Mony to support their Magnificence. I should think the Queen and Ministry, next under God, the best Judges what ease we ought to make. If by our *Impatience* he

he meant the Army, it was needless and absurd; if he meant our *Impatience* here at home, being so far remov'd from the Scene, and in quite another View, he can be no judge of that.

Pag. 7. One would think a People, who by such a Train of wonderful Successes, were now brought to the very Banks of Jordan, could not be so fearful as to stop there, or doubt with themselves, whether or no they should try to pass the River, [Quere Senfet or Scheld] and get Possession of the Land which God had promis'd them; that they could, with their own Eyes, take a view of it [apply'd to Picardy] and behold it was exceeding good, &c. Our Case and the Israelites is very different: What they Conquer'd they got for themselves; we take a view of the Land, as they did, and, behold it to be exceeding good, but good for others: If Joshua had spent many Years in Conquering the Amorites (with the loss of infinite Blood and Treasure) and then deliver'd the Land over to the Gibeonites, the Israelites might have had good reason to murmur; and that has been our Case. Pag. 7. It seems incredible, that Men should for many Tears together struggle with the greatest Difficulties, and successfully go through innumerable Dangers, in pursuit of a Noble End, an End worthy of all the Pains and Trouble they are at, and yet lose their Courage as they gain Ground, &c. Tho' this be a Falsity, yet to lose Courage as we gain Ground, may very probably happen, if we squander our Courage by the Yard, and gain Ground by the Inch.

Pag. 7. Of all the Virtues Human Nature wou'd aspire to, Constancy seems to be that 'tis least made for: A steady pursuit of the same End for any long

time together, has something in it that looks like Immortality [hath not this Flight something in it that looks like Nonsense?] and seems to be above the reach of Mortal Man. How does a steady pursuit look like Immortality? If it looks like Immortality, it certainly seems to be above the reach of Mortal Men. The Earth we live on, the Air we breath, the Nourishment we take, every thing about us is by Nature subject to continual Change; our Bodies themselves are in a perpetual Flux, and not a Moment together the same they were. What Place then can there be for a constant steady Principle of Action amidst so much Inconstancy? If these Reasons were true, it would be impossible not to be Inconstant: With this old beaten Trash of a Flux, he might go on a hundred Pages on the same Subject, without producing any thing new: It is a wonder we had not the grave Observation, That nothing is Constant but Inconstancy. What does all this end in? his first Heat and Edge shows us indeed a Flux of what we did not expect.

Pag. 9. And tho' the end we aim at be the same it was, and certainly nearer., This puts me in mind of a Divine, who Preaching on the Day of Judgment, said, There was one thing he would be bold to affirm, That the Day of Judgment was nearer now, than ever it was since the beginning of the World: So the War is certainly nearer an end to Day than it was Yesterday, tho' it does not end these twenty Years.

Such fickle, inconstant, irresolute Creatures are we in the midst of our bravest Resolutions, when we set out we seem to look at what we are aiming at, thro' that end of the Perspective that magnifies the Ob-

Object, and it brings it nearer to us; but when we are got some way, before we are aware we turn the Glass, and looking thro' the little end, what we are pursuing seems to be at a vast distance, and dwindl'd almost into nothing. This is strange Reasoning, where does his Instrument-maker live? We may have the same Constancy, the same Desire to pursue a thing, and yet not the same Abilities: For Example, In Hunting many Accidents happen; you grow weary, your Horse falls lame, or in leaping a Hedge throws you; you have the same Reason to pursue the Game, but not the same Ability.

P. 10. *Their Zeal perhaps flames at first, but 'tis the flame of Straw, it has not strength to last. When the Multitude once begin to be weary and indifferent, how easily are they then seduc'd into false Measures? How readily do they give into Suspicions against those who would incourage them to Persevere, while they are fond of others, who to serve themselves, fall in with their Complaints, but at the bottom mean nothing but their own Interest. How base and false soever this Reproach be, I have set it almost at length, that I may not be charg'd with unfair Quotation. By the Company the Doctor keeps, and the Patrons he has chosen, I should think him an undoubted Judge when People mean their own Interest; but that I know, Conversing only on one side, generally gives out Thoughts the same turn; just as the Jaundice make those that have it, think all things yellow. This Writer is prejudic'd, and looks upon the rest of the World to be as Self-Interested, as those Persons from whom he has taken his Observation. But if he means the*

present Ministry, it is certain they could find their own Interest in continuing the War as well as other People; their Capacities are not less, nor their Fortunes so great, neither need they be at a loss how to follow in a Path so well beaten. Were they thus inclin'd, the way is open before them, the means that enrich'd their Predecessors, gave them a pretence to continue in Power, and made them almost necessary Evils to the State, are now no longer a Secret. Did their Successors study their own Interest with the same Zeal, as they do that of the Publick, we should not have the Doctor in these Agonies for fear of a Peace, things would be then as he would have them; it would be no longer a *flame of Straw*, but a solid Fire, likely to last as long as his poor Country-men had any Materials to feed it: But I wonder he would talk of those who mean their own *Interest*, in such an Audience, especially before those *who fall in with their Complaints*, unless he had given it quite another turn, and bestow'd some of his Eloquence in showing what he really thinks, that nothing in *Nature*, is so *Eligible* as Self-Interest, tho' purchased at the Price of a lasting War, the Blood and Treasure of his Fellow-Subjects, and the Weal of his Native Country.

P. 11. *This is a Misfortune, which free Assemblies, and popular or mixt Governments, are almost unavoidably expos'd to; and 'tis for this Reason, so few Nations have ever steadily pursued, for any long time, the Measures at first resolv'd on, were they never so right and just; and 'tis for the same Reason, that a single Power seldom fails at long run to be too hard for a Confederacy. A very good*
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Argument for this War, a good Overture and Warning, to make a General for Life: It is an excellent Panegyrick upon Arbitrary-Power; at this rate the *French King* is sure to get the better at last. This Preacher must certainly be an admirable Judge of *popular Assemblies*, by living in an Army. Such poor Writers get a Rote and common place of talking, by reading Pamphlets, and from thence presume to make general Observations upon Government, and set up for Statesmen. If the D. of M—— be *Moses*, what *promised Land* is he bringing us to, unless this Sermon be preach'd only to the *Dutch*? He may have *promised* them *Land*, and they Him something else, and both been as good as their Words. In his Allegory of the People brought out of *Egypt*, does the Doctor mean our Army? The Parallel must then be drawn to make the War last Forty Year, or else it can be no Parallel: We may easily see how near the Comparison grows. *Moses* was accused by certain *Israelites*; Is it a *small thing*, say they, that thou hast brought us out of a Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, to kill us in the Wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us? Hath the D. of M—— been suspected of any such Design? *Moses* was wroth, and said unto the Lord, Respect not their Offerings, I have not taken one Ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. Whose Ox have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose Hand have I receiv'd any Bribe, &c. Does the *British Moses* speak thus to the People? Is there any sort of Agreement between them? Nor are we sure of Gods Commands to go up against the

Amorites, p. 13. as the *Israelites* were, and we have fifty times more reason to murmur. They were carried from the Wilderness, into a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; we from such a Land into the Wilderness, that is Poverty and Misery, and are like to be kept in the Wilderness till this Generation and the next too are consum'd, by Mortgages, Anticipations, &c. *Ibid*, Where the Doctor says, the Country it self, was much too narrow for them, he must certainly mean the *Dutch*, who never think their Frontiers can be too much extended.

The Doctor tells us, p. 15. *The Justice and Necessity of our Cause, is little short of the Force of a Command*: Does God command to Fight, because the Chaplain-General will have no Peace? He asks, *what is bidding us go on, if our Successes are not?* At this rate, whenever any new Success is gain'd, or a Town taken, no Peace must be made. The whole Exhortation against Peace, which follows, is very proper for the Chaplain of an Army, it looks like an other Essay of the *Management of the War*. *These Successes have generally been so much wanted and so little expected*. If we have been ten Years at this vast expence getting Successes that we could not expect, we were mad to begin this War, which hath ruin'd us with all this Success. But why this Acclamation? Is taking one small Town such great Success, as points out to us the *Finger of God*? Who is his God! I believe the General has no little share in his Thoughts, as well as the present Ministry, tho' upon a quite different Consideration. *The Clouds have never this War thickned more, or look'd blacker than this Year: Things look'd*
so

so black on every side, as not to leave us the faintest glimpse of Light, we apprehended nothing less than the dissolution of the Alliance. Whatever the Doctor may be for a Preacher, he has prov'd but an indifferent Prophet. The General and Army may be oblig'd to him for the dissipation of these Clouds, tho' the Ministry are not: Were they the Cause that such Clouds gather'd, *as made him fear an universal Storm, which could no way be fenced against?* To hear him run on in praise of the Wonders of this Campaign, one would scarce believe he were speaking to those very Persons who had formerly gain'd such memorable Victories, and taken Towns of so much greater Importance than *Bouchain*. Had the *French* no Lines before? I thought *Mons, Lisle, &c.* had been once esteem'd considerable Places; but this is his youngest Child, he does like most Mothers, when they are past the Hopes of more, they doat upon the youngest, tho' not so Healthy, nor Praise-worthy, as the rest of the Brethren. Is it our Fault, that *three of the Princes in Alliance with us* resolve to recall their Troops? we brought our *Quota's*, if our Allies did not, by whose Indulgence was it, that some of them have not been press'd more closely upon that Head, or rather have been left to do as they please? It is no matter how hard a Bargain People pretend to make, if they are not ty'd to the Performance.

P. 18. *If the Enemy are stronger than they were,* how are we so near our great Hopes, the *Promised Land*? The affectation of Eloquence, which carries the Doctor away by a Tide of Words, makes him contradict himself, and betray

tray his own Argument. Yet by all those Expressions, p. 19. we can only find, that whatever Success we have, must be *miraculous*; he says, *we must trust to Miracles for our Success*, which as I take it is to tempt God: Tho' p. 20. he thinks, *the most Fearful cannot doubt of God's continuance*. We have had *miraculous Success* this nine Years by his own Account, and this Year, he owns, *we should have been all undone without a new Miracle, black Clouds, &c. hanging over our Heads*; and why may not our Sins provoke God to forsake us, and bring the *black Clouds* again? Greater Sins than our *Inconstancy*! Avarice, Ambition, Disloyalty, Corruption, Pride, Drunkenness, Gaming, Profaneness, Blasphemy, Ignorance, and all other Immoralities and Irreligion! These are certainly much greater Sins, and whether found in a Court, or in a Camp, much likelier to provoke God's Anger, than *Inconstancy*. If we have *not Patience to wait 'till he has finish'd by gradual Steps this great Work, in such a manner as he in his infinite Wisdom shall think fit*. I desire the Doctor would explain himself upon the Business of *gradual Steps*, whether three and twenty Years longer will do, or what time he thinks the General and himself may live; I suppose he does not desire his *gradual Steps* should exceed *Their* date, as fond as he seems of *Miracles*; I believe he is willing enough they should be confin'd to his *Grace's Life*, and his own.

What does he mean, P. 21. by *the natural and moral Consequences that must lead us*? If those moral Consequences are Consequences upon our Morals, they are very small. *Whatever Reason there can be for putting an End to the War but a good*

good one, was a stronger Reason against beginning it. Right! so far we allow: And yet those very Reasons that make us in so much haste to end it, shew the Necessity there was for entering into it. I am in mighty hope to get out of a Squabble, and therefore I had Reason to get in o it; generally the contrary is true. What Condition should we have now been in, had we tamely let that prodigious Power settle and confirm it self without Dispute? It could never settle and confirm it self but by a War. P. 22. Did we not go into the War in hopes of Success? The greatest Argument for going on with the War, is that we may have more Success. According to the Doctrine laid down by our Author, we must never be inclined to Peace till we lose a Battle; every Victory ought to be a Motive to continue the War. Upon this Principle, I suppose a Peace was refus'd after the Battle of Ramillies. How can we doubt that we shall not still succeed, or that an Enemy that grows every day weaker and weaker? &c. The Doctor's Zeal overbears his Memory: Just now the Enemy was stronger than ever. P. 23. If we consider that our Strength is from God, &c. Tho' all Men ought to trust in God, yet our Saviour tells us, we ought to regard Human Means: And in the Point before us, we are told, St. Luke xiv. 31, 32. That a King going forth to war against another King, sitteth down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand; or else while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an Embassage, and desireth Conditions of Peace. Our Saviour was a Preacher of Peace; St. John xiv. 27. Peace I leave with you; my Peace I give

I give unto you, &c. But the Doctor chuseth rather to drive on furiously with *Jehu*; he answers to the Question, *Is it Peace?* as that King did to the Horsemen, *What hast thou to do with Peace? get thee behind me.* He saith, *Our Ingratitude and Impenitence may defeat the surest prospects we have.* May we not ask him, whose *Ingratitude*? As to *Impenitence*, I think this Paragraph is the only one wherein he vouchsafes, and that but very slightly, in his whole Sermon, to remind the People of *Repentance* and *Amendment*; but leaves a *Subject* so little suited to a Day of Joy, to encourage them to go on to obtain the End towards which they have made so many happy Steps: We differ about that End; some desire Peace, others War, that so they may get Money and Power: It is the Interest of some to be in Action, others to be at Rest: Some People clap their Finger upon one Point, and say *That* alone can be a good Peace; We say there may be many sorts of good Peace, of all which we esteem the Queen and Ministry to be the best Judges. The Doctor tells us, *Our Sins may force us to put an ill End to the War*; he should explain what he calls an ill End; I am apt to think he will think nothing good that puts an End to it, since he saith, *Vengeance may affect not only us, but Generations yet unborn*: That they have taken care of already; We have pretty well mortgag'd Posterity by the Expences of this Devouring War, and must we never see an End to it till there is not an Enemy left to contend with, for so our Author would intimate? In what a Condition must we expect to be, long before that? It is very happy for the Nation, that we do not lie
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at the Mercy of this Gentleman; that his Voice is not necessary towards the great End we pant after, the unloading of our Burthen, and the Mitigation of our Taxes. A just and necessary War is an ostentatious Theam, and may bear being declaim'd on. Let us have War, what have we to do with Peace? we have beaten our Enemy, let us beat him again: God has given us Success, he encourages us to go on. Have we not won Battles, and Towns, pass'd the Lines, and taken the great *Bouchain*? What avails our Miseries at home? A little paultry Wealth, the Decay of Trade, Increase of Taxes, Dearness of Necessaries, Expence of Blood, and Lives of our Country-men. Are there not Foreigners to supply their Places? Have not the Loss of so many brave Soldiers been offer'd to the Legislature as a Reason for Calling in such Numbers of poor *Palatines*, as it were to fill up the Chasm of War, and atone for the Desolation amongst our Subjects? If we continue thus prodigal of our Blood and Treasure, in a few Years we shall have as little of the one as the other left; and our Women, if they intend to multiply, must be reduc'd, like the *Amazons*, to go out of the Land, or take them Husbands at home of those wretched Strangers, whom our Piety and Charity relieved. Of the Natives there will be scarce a Remnant preserved; and thus the *British* Name may be endanger'd once more to be lost in the *German*.

Were it not for fear of offending the worthy Doctor, I should be tempted to compare his Sermon with one that some time since made so much Noise in the World; but I am withheld
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by the Consideration of its being so universally
 Condemned, nay Prosecuted on one side: Per-
 haps the Chaplain General will not like the Pa-
 rallel: There may be found the same Heat, the
 same *Inuendo's*, upon different Subjects, tho' the
 Occasion be not so pressing. What Necessity
 was there of Preaching up War to an Army, who
 daily enrich themselves by the Continuation of
 it? Does he not think, Loyalty and Obedience
 would have been a properer Subject? To have
 exhorted them to a Perseverance in their Duty
 to the Queen, to prepare and soften their Minds,
 that they may receive with Resignation, if not
 Applause, whatever Her Majesty shall think fit
 to Transact. The Doctor, without suspicion
 of Flattery, might very well have extoll'd their
 great Actions, and Congratulated with them
 upon the Peace we are likely to enjoy, by which
 they will be at leisure to reap the Harvest of
 their Blood and Toil, take their Rest at Home,
 and be relieved from the Burthen and Danger
 of a Cruel War. And as our Gratitude will be
 ever due to them for delivering us from our
 distant Enemy the *French*, so shall we have
 Reason to bless whoever are the Authors of
 Peace to these distressed Nations, by which we
 may be freed from those nearer and much more
 formidable Enemies, Discontent and Poverty
 at Home.

F I N I S.

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